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A CALL TO Seriouſneſs IN RELIGION.

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To the READER.

TAke it not ill to be ſolicited and urged to mind what moſt concerns and beſt becomes thee. Thou haſt a God to mind, a Soul to ſave, and Heaven to ſeek, and Hell to flee from; Warnings to take notice of, great ſtore of gracious Calls and Means to make thy beſt improvement of; and all the ſolemnities and reſults of an Awful Day of Judgment to prepare for and expect. God now ſeems to addreſs himſelf to Judgment-work; and by the aſtoniſhing ſteps of Providence to call us unto ſome deeper thoughts, than we habituate our ſelves unto. Earthquakes, Storms, and great Convulſions in affairs and hearts may ſtartle us, when the ſofter Whiſpers of our Goſpel Calls may poſſibly (tho' they ſhould not) paſs for trivial things. Due thoughts of Soul concerns forming our hearts and lives after the Will of God, may yet befriend us, but when revenge breaks forth, all our attempts may prove too late and vain to help us: O that I had been wiſe in time! *may quickly prove the cry and wiſh of many a ſecure and confident Fool too late. How many Souls in* Sicily *(and elſewhere) by the late deſolating and ſurprizing Earthquake hath God removed unto the unſeen State? But are they all gone to Heaven? or did God's Providence ſtop their deſcent into their Graves, becauſe they went ſcratching down? And hath this tragical Rebuke no Call, no Errand to the Living? Know we of what this is the Harbinger, and what it doth preſage? Are we ſure God is not putting ſecond Cauſes into their proper frame and order for Conflagration-work? And that the End of all things is not juſt upon us? O then be ſerious about the grand Affair! And take theſe following things into your deepeſt thoughts. They have their Weight; you have your Calls; and God hath his Claims and Expectations from you; his Eye is fixt upon you; his Hand is ſtretched out; and his Heart may be quickly hardned againſt you: Yet Patience waits, Grace courts, and God will help you, if you will faithfully read, conſider and improve theſe following things which the Author thought and found of no ſmall conſequence to thorow work.*

1. CONsider; our Affections and Actions ſhould be ſomewhat anſwerable to the Greatneſs of the Ends to which they are intended. Now the Ends of a Chriſtian's Deſires and Endeavours are ſo great, that no Humane Underſtanding on Earth can comprehend them; whether you reſpect their proper Excellency, their exceeding Importance, or their abſolute Neceſſity.

Theſe Ends are, The Glorifying of God, the Salvation of our own and other mens Souls, in our eſcaping the Torments of Hell, and poſſeſſing the Glory of Heaven. And can a man be too much affected with things of ſuch moment? Can he deſire them too Earneſtly, or Love them too Violently, or labour for them too Diligently? When we know that if our Prayers prevail not, and our Labour ſucceed not, we are undone for ever, I think it concerns us to ſeek and labour to the purpoſe. When it is put to the Queſtion, Whether we ſhall live for ever in Heaven or in Hell? And the queſtion muſt be reſolved upon our obeying the Goſpel, or our diſobeying it, upon the painfulneſs or the ſlothfulneſs of our preſent endeavours; I think it is time for us to beſtir our ſelves, and to leave our trifling and complimenting with God.

2. Conſider; Our Diligence ſhould be ſomewhat anſwerable to the greatneſs of the Work which we have to do, as well as to the Ends of it. Now the Works of a Chriſtian here are very many, and very great; The Soul muſt be renewed; Many and great Corruptions muſt be mortified; Cuſtom and Temptations, and Worldly Intereſt muſt be conquered: Fleſh muſt be maſtered: Self muſt be denied: Life, and Friends and Credit, and all muſt be ſlighted: Conſcience muſt be upon good grounds quieted: Aſſurance of Pardon and Salvation muſt be attained. And though it is God that muſt give us theſe, and and that freely, without our own merit; yet will he not give them ſo freely, as without our earneſt ſeeking and labour. Beſides there is a deal

deal of knowledge to be got, for the guiding our ſelves, for the defending the Truth, for the direction of others and a deal of skill for the right managing of our parts: Many Ordinances are to be uſed, and Duties performed, ordinary and extraordinary: Every age, and year, and day, doth require freſh ſucceſſion of duty: Every place we come in, every perſon that we have to deal with, every change of our Condition; doth ſtill require the renewing of our labour, and bringeth Duty along with it: Wives, Children, Servants, Neighbours, Friends, Enemies, all of them call for duty from us: And all this of great importance too; ſo that for the moſt of it, if we miſcarry in it, it would prove our undoing.

Judge then your ſelves, whether men that have ſo much buſineſs lying upon their hands, ſhould not beſtir them; and whether it be their wiſdom either to Delay or to Loiter?

3. Conſider, Our diligence ſhould be ſomewhat quickned, becauſe of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of the time allotted us for the performing of all this great work, and the many and great impediments which we meet with. Yet a few days, and we ſhall be here no more. Time paſſeth on: Many hundred diſeaſes are ready to aſſault us: We that now are preaching, and hearing, and talking, and walking, muſt very ſhortly be carried on mens backs, and laid in the duſt, and there left to the worms in darkneſs and corruption; we are almoſt there already; It is but a few days, or months, or years, and what is that when once they are paſt? We know not whether we ſhall have another Sermon, or Sabbath or Hour. How then ſhould thoſe men beſtir them for their Everlaſting Reſt, who know they have ſo ſhort a ſpace for ſo great a work? Beſides every ſtep in the way hath its difficulties; the gate is ſtrait, and the way narrow: The righteous themſelves are ſcarcely ſaved: Scandals and diſcouragements will be ſtill caſt before us: And can all theſe be overcome by ſloathful endeavours?

4. **Moreover,** our diligence ſhould be ſomewhat anſwerable to the diligence of our Enemies in ſeeking our deſtruction. For if we ſit ſtill while they are plotting and labouring; or if we be lazy in in our defence, while they are diligent in aſſaulting us, you may eaſily conceive how we are likely to ſpeed. How diligent is Satan in all kind of Temptations? Therefore, *Be ſober and vigilant,* (ſaith 1 Pet 5. 8.) *becauſe your adverſary the Devil as a roaring Lyon walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour; Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the Faith.* How diligent are all the Miniſters of Satan? falſe teachers, ſcorners at godlineſs, malicious perſecutors, all unwearied; and our inward corruption the moſt buſie and diligent of all: Whatever we are about, it is ſtill reſiſting us: Depraving our duties, perverting our thoughts, dulling our affections to good, exciting them to evil: And will a feeble reſiſtance then ſerve our turn? Should not we be more active for our own preſervation, than our Enemies for our ruine?

5. Our Affections and Endeavours ſhould bear ſome proportion with the Talents which we have received, and means which we have enjoyed, It may well be expected that a horſeman ſhall go faſter than a footman; and he, that hath a ſwift Horſe, faſter than he that hath a ſlow one: More work will be expected from a ſound man, than from the ſick; and from a man at Age, than from a Child: And to whom men commit much, from them they will expect the more. Now the Talents which we have received are many and great: The means which we have enjoyed are very much, and very precious. What people breathing on Earth, have had plainer Inſtructions, or more forceable Perſuaſions, or conſtant Admonitions, in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon? Sermons, till we have been weary of them; and Sabbaths, till we have prophaned them? Excellent Books in ſuch plenty, that we knew not which to read but loathing them through abundance, have thrown by all? What People have had God ſo near them, as we have

have had? Or have ſeen Chriſt, as it were, crucified before their eyes, as we have done? What People have had Heaven and Hell, as it were, opened unto them, as we? Scarce a day wherein we have not had ſome ſpur to put us on. What ſpeed then ſhould ſuch a People make for Heaven? And how ſhould they fly that are thus winged? And how ſwiftly ſhould they ſail that have Wind and Tide to help them? Believe it Brethren, God looks for more from *England*, than from moſt Nations in the World; and for more from you that enjoy theſe helps, than from the dark and untaught Congregations of the Land. A ſmall meaſure of Grace beſeems not ſuch a People; nor will an ordinary diligence in the work of God, excuſe them.

6. The Vigour of our Affections and Actions ſhould be ſomewhat anſwerable to the great coſt beſtowed upon us, and to the deep engaging mercies which we have received from God. Surely we owe more ſervice to our Maſter, from whom we have our maintenance, than we do to a ſtranger to whom we were never beholden. Oh the coſt that God hath been at for our ſakes! The riches of Sea and Land, of Heaven and Earth, hath he poured out unto us. All our lives have been filled up with Mercies: We cannot look back upon one hour of it, or one paſſage in it, but we may behold Mercy. We feed upon Mercy, we wear Mercy on our backs, we tread upon Mercy; Mercy within us, common and ſpecial; Mercy without us, for this life, and for that to come; Oh the rare Deliverances that we have partaked of, both National and Perſonal! How oft, how ſeaſonably, how fully have our Prayers been heard, and our fears removed? What large Catalogues of particular Mercies can every Chriſtian draw forth and rehearſe? To offer to number them would be an endleſs taſk, as to number the Stars, or the Sands of the Shore. If there be any difference betwixt Hell (where we ſhould have been) and Earth (where we now are) yea or Heaven (which is offered us) then certainly

we have received Mercy. Yea, if the Blood of the Son of God be Mercy, then are we ingaged to God in Mercy; for ſo much did it coſt him to recover us to himſelf. And ſhould a People of ſuch deep ingagements be lazy in their returns? Shall God think nothing too much nor too good for us; and ſhall we think all too much that we do for him? Thou that art an obſerving ſenſible man, who knoweſt how much thou art beholden to God? I appeal to thee, Is not a loitering performance of a few heartleſs duties, an unworthy requital of ſuch admirable kindneſs? For my own part, when I compare my ſlow and unprofitable life, with the frequent and wonderful mercies received, it ſhames me, it ſilences me, and leaves me unexcuſable.

7. Again, conſider, All the relations which we ſtand in toward God, whether common or ſpecial, do call upon us for our utmoſt diligence. Should not the Pot be wholly at the Service of the Potter, and the Creature at the ſervice of his Creator? Are we his Children, and do we not owe him our moſt tender Affections, and dutiful Obedience? Are we the Spouſe of Chriſt, and do we not owe him our Obſervance, and our Love? *If he be our Father, where is his honour? And if he be our Maſter, where is his fear?* Mal. 1. 6. *We call him Lord and Maſter, and we do well*: But if our induſtry be not anſwerable to our aſſumed relations, we condemn our ſelves, in ſaying we are his Children, or his Servants. How will the hard labour, and daily toil that Servants undergo to pleaſe their Maſters, judge and condemn thoſe men who will not labour ſo hard for their great Maſter? Surely there's none have a better or more honourable Maſter than we; nor can any expect ſuch fruit of their labours, 1 *Cor* 15. *ult.*

8. Conſider, What haſte ſhould they make who have ſuch Rods at their Backs, as be at ours? And how painfully ſhould they work, who are ſtill driven on by ſuch ſharp Afflictions? If either we wander out of the way, or loiter in it, how ſurely do we prepare for our own

own ſmart? Every Creature is ready to be God's Rod to reduce us, or to put us on: Our ſweeteſt Mercies will become our Sorrows: Or rather than he will want a Rod, the Lord will make us a ſcourge to our ſelves: Our diſeaſed bodies ſhall make us groan; our perplexed minds ſhall make us reſtleſs, our Conſcience ſhall be as a Scorpion in our boſom. And is it not eaſier to endure the labour, than the ſpur? Had we rather be ſtill thus afflicted, than to be up and going? Alas how like are we to tired Horſes, that will lie down and groan, or ſtand ſtill, and let you lay on them as long as you will, rather than they will freely travel on their journey? And thus we make our lives miſerable, and neceſſitate God, if he love us, to chaſtiſe us. It is true, thoſe that do moſt, do meet with Afflictions alſo: But ſurely according to the meaſure of their peace of Conſcience, and faithfulneſs to Chriſt, ſo is the bitterneſs of their Cup (for the moſt part) abated.

9. How cloſe ſhould they ply their work, who have ſuch great preparations attending them, as we have? All the World are our Servants, that we may be the Servants of God. The Sun and Moon and Stars attend us with their light and influence: The Earth, with all its furniture, is at our ſervice: How many thouſand Plants, and Flowers, and Fruits, and Birds, and Beaſts do all attend us? The Sea with all its Inhabitants, the Air, the Wind, the Froſt and Snow, the Heat and Fire, the Clouds and Rain, all wait upon us while we do our work. Yea, the Angels are Miniſtring Spirits for the Service of the Elect. And is it not an intolerable crime for us to trifle, while all theſe are employed to aſſiſt us? Nay more; the Patience and Goodneſs of God doth wait upon us; the Lord Jeſus waiteth in the offers of his Blood; The Holy Ghoſt waiteth, in ſtriving with our backward Hearts: Beſides, all his Servants, the Miniſters of his Goſpel, who ſtudy and wait, and preach and wait, and pray and wait upon careleſs Sinners: And ſhall Angels and Men, yea the Lord

Lord himſelf, ſtand by and look on, and, as it were, hold thee the Candle while thou doſt nothing? O Chriſtians, I beſeech you, when ever you are upon your knees in prayer, or reproving the Tranſgreſſors, or exhorting the Obſtinate, or upon any duty, do but remember what attendants you have for this Work; and then judge how it behoves you to perform it.

10. Should not our Affections and Endeavours be anſwerable to the acknowledged Principles of our Chriſtian Profeſſion? Sure if we are Chriſtians indeed, and mean as we ſpeak, when we Profeſs the Faith of Chriſt, we ſhall ſhew it in Affections and Actions, as well as Expreſſions. Why the very fundamental Doctrines of our Religion are, That God is the chief Good, and all our Happineſs conſiſts in his Love, and therefore it ſhould be valued and ſought above all things: That he is our only Lord, and therefore chiefly to be ſerved: That we muſt love him with all our heart, and ſoul, and ſtrength: That the very buſineſs that men have in the World, and the only errand that God ſent them about, is to glorifie God, and Obtain Salvation, *&c.* And do mens duties and converſations ſecond this Profeſſion? Are theſe Doctrines ſeen in the painfulneſs of mens Practice? Or rather do not their works deny what their words do confeſs? One would think by mens Actions that they did not believe a word of the Goſpel to be true. Oh ſad day when mens own Tongues and Profeſſions ſhall be brought in againſt them, and condemn them.

11. How forward and painful ſhould we be in that Work, where we are ſure we can never do enough? If there were any danger in overdoing, then it might well cauſe men to moderate their endeavours: But we know, *That if we could do all, we were but unprofitable Servants*, much more when we are ſure to fail in all. It is true, a man may poſſibly pray too much, or preach too much, or hear, or reprove too much, (though I have known few that ever did ſo) but yet no man

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can obey or ſerve God too much: For one duty may be ſaid to be too long, when it ſhuts out another; and then it ceaſeth indeed to be a duty. So that, though all Superſtition, or Worſhip of our deviſing, may be called a Righteouſneſs overmuch; yet as long as you keep your Service to the Rule of the Word, that ſo it might have the true nature of Obedience, you never need to fear being Righteous too much: For elſe we ſhould reproach the Lord and Law-giver of the Church, as if he commanded us to do too much. Ah, if the World were not mad with malice, they could never be ſo blind in this point as they are: To think that faithful diligence in ſerving Chriſt, is folly and ſingularity; and that they who ſet themſelves wholly to ſeek eternal Life, are but preciſe *Puritans*? The time is near when they will eaſily confeſs, that God cannot be loved or ſerved too much, and that no man can be too buſie to ſave his Soul: For the World you may eaſily do too much, but here (in Gods way) you cannot.

12. It is the nature of every Grace, to put on the Soul to diligence and ſpeed. If you loved God, you would make haſte, and not delay or trifle: you would think nothing too much that you could poſſibly do: You would be ambitious to ſerve him, and pleaſe him ſtill more: Love is quick and impatient, it is active and obſervant. If you loved Chriſt, you would keep his Commandments, and not accuſe them of too much ſtrictneſs. So alſo, if you had Faith, it would quicken and encourage you: If you had the hope of Glory, it would, as the ſpring in the Watch, ſet all the wheels of your Souls a-going. If you had the fear of God, it would rouze you out of your ſlothfulneſs. If you had Zeal, it would enflame you, and eat you up. God hath put all his Graces in the Soul on purpoſe to be oyl to the wheels, to be life to the dead, to mind men of their duty, and diſpoſe them to it, and to carry them to himſelf: So that in what degree ſoever thou art ſanctified, in the ſame degree thou wilt be ſerious and laborious in the work of God. 13. Confi-

13. Consider; They that trifle in the way to Heaven, do but lose all their labour, when serious endeavours do obtain their end. The Proverb is, *As good never a whit, as never the better.* If two be running in a Race, he that runs slowest had as good never run at all; for now he loseth the prize and his labour both. Many, who like *Agrippa, are but almost Christians*, will find in the end they shall be but almost saved. God hath set the rate at which the Pearl must be bought: if you bid a penny less than that rate, you had as good bid nothing. As a man that is lifting at some weighty thing, if he put to almost strength enough, but yet not sufficient, it is as good he put to none at all, for he doth but lose all his labour. Oh how many Professors of Christianity will find this true to their sorrow, who have had a mind to the ways of God, and have kept up a dull task of Duty, and plodded on in a formal lifeless Profession, but never came to serious Christanity? How many a duty have they lost, for want of doing them thoroughly, and to the purpose? Perhaps their place in Hell may be the easier, and so their labour is not lost; but as to the obtaining Salvation it is all lost. *Many shall seek to enter, but shall not be able*: who if they had striven, might have been able. O therefore put to a little more diligence and strength, that all be not in vain that you have done already.

14. Furthermore, we have lost a great deal of precious Time already, and therefore it is reason that we labour so much the harder. If a Traveller do sleep, or trifle out the most of the day, he must travel so much the faster in the evening, or else he is like to fall short of his journeys end. With some of us our Childhood and Youth is gone: With some also their middle Age is past, and the time before us is very uncertain and short. What a deal of time have we slept away, and talkt away, and plaid away? What a deal have we spent away in Worldly thoughts and labours, or in meer idleness? Though in likelihood the most

moſt of our time is ſpent, yet how little of of our work is done? And is it not time now to beſtir our ſelves in the evening of our days? The time which we have loſt, can never be recalled: Should we not then redeem it by improving the little which remaineth? You may receive indeed an equal recompence with thoſe that have born the burthen and heat of the day, though you came not in to the laſt hour; but then you muſt be ſure to labour ſoundly that hour. It is enough ſure that we have loſt ſo much of our lives; Let us not now be ſo fooliſh as to loſe the reſt, 1 Pet. 4. 2, 3, 4.

15. Conſider; The greater are your layings out, the greater will be your comings in. Though you may ſeem to loſe your labour at the preſent, yet the hour cometh when you ſhall find it with advantage. The Seed which is buried and dead, will bring forth a plentiful increaſe at the Harveſt. Whatever you do, and whatever you ſuffer, this *Everlaſting Reſt* will pay for all. There is no repenting of labours and ſufferings in Heaven; None ſays, would I had ſpared my pains, and prayed leſs, or been leſs ſtrict and preciſe, and did as the reſt of my Neighbours did: There is never ſuch a thought in Heaven as theſe. But on the contrary, it will be their Joy to look back upon their labours and tribulations, and to conſider how the mighty power of God did bring them thorow all. Whoever complained that he came to Heaven at too dear a rate; or that his Salvation coſt him more than it is worth? We may ſay of our labours, as *Paul* of his ſufferings, *Rom.* 8. 18. *For I reckon that the ſufferings* (and labours) *of this preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhall be revealed in us.* We labour but for a moment, but we ſhall reſt for ever. Who would not put forth all his ſtrength for one hour, when he may be a Prince while he lives for that hours work? Oh, what is the Duty, and ſuffering of a ſhort frail life, which is almoſt at an end as ſoon as it begins, in reſpect of the endleſs Joys with God? Will not all our

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tears then be wiped away? and all the ſorrows of our Duties forgotten? But yet the Lord will not forget them? *For he is not unjuſt to forget our work and labour of love*, Heb. 6. 10.

16. Conſider; Violence and laborious ſtriving for Salvation, is the way that the Wiſdom of God hath directed us to, as beſt; as his Soveraign Authority appointed us, as neceſſary. Who knows the way to Heaven better than the God of Heaven? When men tell us that we are too ſtrict and preciſe, whom do they accuſe, God or us? If we do no more than what we are commanded, nor ſo much neither; they may as well ſay, God hath made Laws which are too ſtrict and preciſe. Sure if it were a fault, it would lie in him that commands it, and not in us who are bound to obey. And dare theſe men think that they are wiſer than God? Do they know better than he, what men muſt do to be ſaved? Theſe are the men that ask us whether we are wiſer than all the World beſides? and yet they will pretend to be wiſer than God, What do they leſs, when God bids us take the moſt diligent courſe, and they tell us, It is more ado than needs? Mark well the Language of the Laws of God; and ſee how you can reconcile it with the Language of the World, *Mat.* 11. 12. *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* Or as it is in *Luke* 16. 16. *Every on preſſeth into it*; Luke 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; for many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and not be able.* So. *Matth.* 7. 13, 14. *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. *Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whither thou goeſt.* 1 Cor. 9. 24. *Know ye not, that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that you may obtain.* 2 Tim. 2. 5. *If a man ſtrive for Maſteries, yet he is not crowned, except he ſtrive lawfully*, that is, powerfully and prevailingly, *Phil.* 2. 12. *Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling.* 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Give diligence to make your calling and Election ſure.* 1 Pet. 4. 18.

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If the Righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and ſinners appear? So *Phil.* 1. 27. *and* 3. 14. 1 *Tim.* 6. 12, 18, 19. *Deut.* 6 5, *&c.* This is the conſtant Language of Chriſt: And which ſhall I follow, God or Men; yea, and that the worſt and moſt wicked Men? Shall I think, that every Ignorant wordly Sot, that can only call a man *Puritan*, knows more than Chriſt, and can teach him to make Laws for his Church, or can tell God how to mend the Scriptures? Let them bring all the ſeeming Reaſons that they can againſt the holy violent ſtriving of the Saints; and this ſufficeth me to confute them all, That God is of another mind, and he hath commanded me to do much more than I do: And though I could ſee no reaſon for it, yet his Will is Reaſon enough to me; I am ſure God is worthy to govern us, if we were better than we are. Who ſhould make Laws for us, but he that made us? And who ſhould line out the way to Heaven, but he that muſt bring us thither? And who ſhall determine on what Conditions we ſhall be ſaved but he that beſtows the gift of Salvation? *So* that let World, or Fleſh, or Devil, ſpeak againſt a holy laborious courſe, this is my anſwer, God hath commanded it.

17. Moreover; It is a courſe that all men in the World either do, or will approve of. There is not a man that ever was, or is, or ſhall be, but ſhall one day juſtifie the diligence of the Saints. and give his verdict in the approbation of their Wiſdom. And who would not go that way which every man ſhall applaud? It is true, 'tis now a Way every-where ſpoken againſt, and hated; but let me tell you, 1. Moſt that ſpeak againſt it, do in their judgments approve of it; only becauſe practice of Godlineſs is againſt the pleaſures of the Fleſh, therefore do they, againſt their own judgments, reſiſt it: They have not one word of Reaſon againſt it, but Reproaches and Railing are their beſt Arguments. 2. Thoſe that now are againſt it, whether in Judgment or Paſſion, will ſhortly be every man of another mind

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If they come to Heaven, their minds muſt be changed before they come there. If they go to Hell, their Judgments will then be altered, whether they will or no. If you could ſpeak with every Soul that ſuffereth thoſe Torments, and ask their Judgments, whether it be poſſible to be too Diligent and Serious in ſeeking Salvation? you may eaſily conjecture what anſwer they would return. Take the moſt bitter Derider or Perſecutor of Godlineſs, even thoſe that will venture their lives for to overthrow it, If thoſe men do not ſhortly eat their own words, and wiſh a thouſand times that they had been the moſt holy, diligent Chriſtians on Earth, then let me bear the ſhame of a falſe Prophet for ever. Remember this, you that will be of the Opinion and Way that moſt are of; Why will you not be of the Opinion then that all will be ſhortly of? Why will you be of a judgment which you are ſure you ſhall all ſhortly change? Oh that you were but as wiſe in this, as thoſe in Hell!

18. Conſider; They that have been the moſt ſerious, painful Chriſtians, when they come to die do exceedingly lament their negligence, Thoſe that have wholly addicted themſelves to the Work of God, and have made it the main buſineſs of their lives, and have ſlighted the World, and mortified the Fleſh, and have been the Wonders of the World for their heavenly Converſations; yet when Conſcience is let looſe upon them, and God withdraws the ſenſe of his Love, how do their Failings wound them, and diſquiet them? What terrors do the Souls of many undergo, who are generally admired for their Godlineſs and Innocency. Even thoſe that are hated and derided by the World for being ſo ſtrict, and are thought to be almoſt beſides themſelves for their extraordinary diligence; yet commonly when they lye a dying, do wiſh, Oh, that they had been a thouſand times more holy, more heavenly, more laborious for their Souls! What a caſe then will the negligent world be in when their Conſciences are awaked,

awaked, when they lye dying, and look behind them upon a lazy, negligent life; and look before them upon a severe and terrible Judgment? What an esteem will they have of a holy life? For my own part, I may say as *Erasmus*, *Ac usint quod nimium fecerim; verum Conscientia mea me accusat quod minus fecerim, quodque lentior fuerim.* They accuse me for doing too much, but my own Conscience accuseth me for doing too little, and being to slow: And it is far easier bearing the scorns of the World, than the scourges of Conscience. The World speaks at a distance without me, so that though I hear their words, I can chuse whether I will feel them: But my Conscience speaks within me at the very heart, so that every check doth pierce me to the quick. Conscience when it is reprehended justly, is the Messenger of God; but ungodly revilers are the voice of the Devil. I had rather be reproached by the Devil for seeking Salvation, than to be reproved of God for neglecting it: I had rather the World should call me *Puritan* in the Devils name, than Conscience should call me *Loiterer* in Gods Name, As God and Conscience are more useful friends than Satan and the World; so are they more dreadful, irresistible Enemies.

19. Consider how far many a man goes, and what a deal of Pains he takes for Heaven, and yet misseth it for want of more. When every man that striveth is not crowned, (2 *Tim.* 2. 5) and many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able, (*Luke* 23. 24.) and the very Children of the Kingdom shall be shut out, (*Mat.* 13. 41.) and they that have heard the Word and received it with Joy, (*Matth.* 13. 20.) and have heard the Preacher gladly, and done many things after him, shall yet perish (*Mark* 6. 20.) It is time for us to look about us, and take heed of loitering. When they that seek God daily, and delight to know his ways, and ask of him the Ordinances of Justice, and take delight in approaching to God & that in fasting & afflicting their Souls, (*Isa.* 56. 2, 3.) are yet shut out with Hypocrites and Unbelievers:

When they that have been enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly gift, and of the good word of God, and of the Powers of the World to come, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, may yet fall away beyond recovery, and crucifie to themselves the Son of God, (Hebrews 6. 4, 5, 6.) Whe they that have *received the knowledge of the the Truth an were sanctified by the Blood of the Covenant, may yet sin wilfully, and tread under foot the Son of God, and do dispight t the Spirit of Grace till there is nothing left them, but the fearful expectation of Judgment, and fire that shall devour th adversaries,* (Heb. 10. 26, 27, 28, 29.) should not thi rouze us out of our laziness and security? How far hat many a man followed Christ, and yet forsaken him whe it comes to the selling of all, to bearing the Cross, t burning at Stake, or to the renouncing of all hi Worldly Interests and Hopes? What a deal of pain hath many a man taken for Heaven, that never di obtain it? How many Prayers, Sermons, Fasts, Alm good Desires, Confessions, Sorrow and Tears fo sin, *&c.* Have all been lost, and fallen short of th Kingdom? Methinks this should affright us out of ou sluggishness, and make us strive to outslip the highe Formalist?

20. Consider, God hath resolv thatied, Heaven sha not be had on easier terms. He hath not only com manded it as a duty; but hath tyed our salvation the performance of it. Rest must always follow Labou He that hath ordained in his Church on Earth, *That that will not Labour, shall not Eat*; hath also decreed co cerning the Everlasting Inheritance, *That he that strive not, shall not enter* They must now *lay up a Treasure Heaven*, if they will *find* it there, *Matth.* 19. 20. Th must *seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousn* Matth. 6. 33. They must not *Labour for the food that p risheth, but for that food which endureth to Everlasting Li* Joh 6. 27. Some think that it is good to be Hol but yet not of such absolute necessity, but that a m may be saved without it; But God hath determin

on the contrary, *That without it no man ſhall ſee his face*, Heb. 12. 14. Seriouſneſs is the very thing wherein conſiſteth our ſincerity. If thou art not ſerious, thou art not a Chriſtian. It is not only a high Degree in Chriſtianity, but of the very life and eſſence of it. As Fencers upon a Stage (who have all their skill at their weapons, and do eminently and induſtriouſly Act their parts, but do not ſeriouſly intend the death of each other) do differ from Souldiers or Combatants, who fight in good ſadneſs for their Lives: Juſt ſo do Hypocrites differ from ſerious Chriſtians. If Men could be ſaved without this ſerious Diligence, they would never regard it; All the excellencies of God's ways would never entice them. But when God hath reſolved, That if you will have your eaſe here, you ſhall have none hereafter, Is it not wiſdom then to beſtir our ſelves to the utmoſt?

Yet, leſt all this ſhould not prevail, I will add ſomewhat more, if it be poſſible, to perſwade thee to be ſerious in thy Endeavours for Heaven.

1. Conſider; God is in good earneſt with you; and why then ſhould not you be ſo with him? In his Commands, he means as he ſpeaks, and will verily require your real Obedience. In this Threatnings he is ſerious, and will make them all good againſt the Rebellious. In his Promiſes he is ſerious, and will fulfil them to the Obedient, even to the leaſt tittle. In his Judgments he is ſerious, as he will make his Enemies know to their terrour. Was not God in good earneſt when he drowned the World, when he conſumed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, when he ſcattered the *Jews*? Hath he not been in good ſadneſs with us lately in *England*, and *Ireland*, and *Germany*? and very ſhortly will he lay hold on his Enemies particularly Man by Man, and make them know that he is in good earneſt: Eſpecially when it comes to the great reckoning day. And is it time then for us to dally with God?

2. Jeſus Chriſt was ſerious in Purchaſing our Redemption. He was ſerious in Teaching, when he neg-

left his Meat and Drink, Joh. 4. 32. He was serious in Praying, when he *continued all night* at it, *Luk.* 6. 12. He was serious in doing good, *When his Kindred came and laid hands on him, thinking he had been beside himself*, Mark 3. 20, 21. He was serious in suffering, when he fasted forty days, was tempted, betrayed, spit on, buffetted, Crowned with Thorns, sweat water and blood, was crucified, pierced, died: There was no Jesting in all this: And should not we be serious in seeking our own Salvation?

3. The Holy Ghost is serious in soliciting us for our Happiness; his Motions are frequent and pressing, and importunate: He striveth with our Hearts, *Gen.* 6. 3. He is *grieved when we resist him*, Ephes. 4 30. And should not we then be serious in obeying his Motions, and yielding to his Suit?

4. God is serious in hearing our Prayers, and delivering us from our dangers, and removing our troubles, and bestowing his Mercies. *When we are afflicted, he is afflicted with us*, Isa. 63 9. He regardeth every groan and sigh, he putteth every Tear into his Bottle: He condoleth their Misery, when he is forced to chastise them: *How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim* (saith the Lord) *how shall I make thee as* Admah, *and as* Zeboim? *My Heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together*, Hos. 11. 8. He heareth even the *Rebellious* oft times, when they call upon him in their misery; *When they cry to him in their trouble, he delivereth them out of their distress*, *Psal.* 78. 37, 38. *Psal.* 107. 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 28. Yea, the next time thou art in trouble, thou wilt beg for serious regard of thy prayers, and grant of thy desires. And shall we be so slight in the work of God, when we expect he should be so regardful of us? Shall we have all real Mercies down weight; and shall we return such superficial and frothy service?

5. Consider, The Ministers of Christ are serious in Instructing and exhorting you, and why should not you be as serious in obeying their Instructions? They are serious in study; serious in Prayer; serious in perswading your

your Souls to the Obedience of Christ; They beg of God, they beg of you, they hope, they wait, they long more for the Conversion and Salvation of your Souls, than they do for any worldly good: *You are their boasting, their Crown and Joy*, 1 Thes. 2. 19, 20. *Your stedfastness in Christ they value as their Lives*, 1 Thes. 3. 8. They are content to *be offered up in the Service of your Faith*, Phil. 2. 17. If they kill themselves with Study and Preaching, or if they suffer Martyrdom for Preaching the Gospel; they think their lives are well bestowed, that their Preaching do but prevail for saving of your Souls. And shall other Men be so painful and careful for your Salvation, and should you be so careless and negligent of your own? Is it not a serious charge that is given to Ministers in 2 *Tim.* 4. 1? And a serious pattern that is given them in *Act.* 20. 30, 31? Surely no Man can be bound to be more serious and painful for the welfare of another, than he is bound to be for himself.

6. How serious and diligent are all the Creatures in their Service to thee? What haste makes the Sun to compass the World? And how truly doth it return at its appointed hour? So do the Moon and other Planets. The Springs are always flowing for thy use; The Rivers still running; The Spring and Harvest keep their times. How hard doth thy Ox labour for thee, from Day to Day? How painful and speedily doth thy Horse bear thee in Travel? And shall all these be laborious, and thou only negligent? Shall they all be so serious in serving thee, and yet thou be so slight in thy Service to God?

7. Consider, The Servants of the World and the Devil, are serious and diligent; they ply their work continually with unweariedness and delight, as if they could never do enough: They make haste, and march furiously, as if they were afraid of coming to Hell too late. They bear down Ministers, and Sermons, and Counsel, and all before them. And shall they do more for the Devil, than thou wilt do for God? Or be more diligent for Damnation, than thou wilt be for Salvation?

Hast

Haſt not thou a better Maſter? And ſweeter Employment? And greater Encouragement? And a better reward?

8. The time was when thou waſt ſerious thy ſelf in thy ſervice to Satan and the *Fleſh*, if it be not ſo yet: Doſt thou not remember how eagerly thou didſt follow thy ſports? Or how violently thou waſt addicted to cuſtoms, or evil company, or ſinful delights? Or how earneſtly thou waſt bent after thy profits or riſing in the World? And wilt thou not now be more earneſt and violent for God? *What profit hadſt thou then in thoſe things, whereof thou art now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is Death: But now being made free from Sin, and become the Servants of God, ye have your fruit unto Holineſs, and the end Everlaſting Life.* Rom. 6. 21, 22.

9. You are yet to this Day in good earneſt about the matters of this Life; If you are ſick, what ſerious groans and complaints do you utter? All the Town ſhall quickly know it, if your pain be great. If you are poor, how hard do you labour for your living, leſt your Wife and Children ſhould ſtarve and famiſh? If one fall down in a ſwoon in the Houſe, or Street, or in the Congregation, how ſeriouſly will you run to relieve and recover them? And is not the buſineſs of our Salvation of far greater moment? Are you not poor? And ſhould you not then be Labourers? Are you not in fight for your Lives? And is it time to ſleep? Are you not in a race, and is not the prize, the *Crown of Glory*? And ſhould you then ſit ſtill, or take your eaſe?

10. There is no jeſting in Heaven, nor in Hell. The Saints have a real Happineſs, and the Damned a real Miſery; the Saints are ſerious and high in their Joy and Praiſe; and the Damned are ſerious and deep in their ſorrow and complaints. There are no remiſs or ſleepy praiſes in Heaven; nor any remiſs or ſleepy Lamentations in Hell: All Men there, are in good ſadneſs. And ſhould we not then be ſerious now? *Reader*, I dare promiſe thee, the thoughts of theſe things will ſhortly

ſerious

ſerious thoughts with thy ſelf. When thou comeſt to Death or Judgment, O what deep heart-piercing thoughts wilt thou have of Eternity! Methinks I foreſee thee already aſtoniſhed, to think how thou couldſt poſſibly make ſo light of theſe things! Methinks I even hear thee crying out of thy ſtupidity and madneſs!

Yet becauſe I know the ſtrange obſtinacy and rockineſs of the Heart of Man, and becauſe I would fain drive this Nail to the Head, and leave theſe perſwaſions faſtened in thy Heart, that ſo, if it be poſſible, thou mighteſt be awakened to thy Duty, and thy Soul might live: I ſhall therefore proceed with thee yet a little further: And I once more intreat thee to ſtir up thy attention, and go along with me in the free and ſober uſe of thy Reaſon, while I propound to thee theſe following Queſtions: And I command thee from God, that thou ſtifle not thy Conſcience, and reſiſt not Conviction, but anſwer them faithfully, and obey accordingly.

1. *Queſt.* If you could grow Rich by Religion, or get Lands and Lordſhips by being diligent in godlineſs: Or if you could get Honour or Preferment by it in the World: Or could be recovered from Sickneſs by it, or could live for ever in proſperity on Earth: What kind of Lives would you then lead? And what pains would you take in the Service of God? And is not the reſt of the Saints a more excellent Happineſs than all this?

2. *Queſt.* If the Law of the Land did puniſh every breach of the Sabbath, or every omiſſion of Family Duties, or Secret Duties, or every cold and heartleſs Prayer, with Death. If it were Felony or Treaſon to be ungodly and negligent in Worſhip, and looſe in your Lives; what manner of perſons would you then be? And what Lives would you lead? And is not eternal Death more terrible than Temporal?

3. *Queſt.* If it were Gods ordinary Courſe to puniſh every ſin with ſome preſent Judgment, ſo that every time a Man Swears, or is in Drink, or ſpeaks a Lie, or Backbiteth his Neighbour, he ſhould be ſtruck Dead, or Blind,

or

or lame in the place. If God did puniſh every cold Prayer, or neglect of Duty with ſome Remarkable Plague; what manner of perſons would you then be? If you ſhould ſuddenly fall down Dead like *Ananias* and *Saphira* with the Sin in your Hands; or the Plague of God ſhould ſeize upon you, as upon the *Iſraelites*, while their ſweet Morſels were yet in their Mouths. If but a Mark ſhould be ſet in the Forehead of every one that neglected a Duty, or committed a Sin: What kind of Lives would you then lead? And is not Eternal Wrath more Terrible than all this? Give but Reaſon leave to ſpeak.

4. *Queſt.* If one of your old Acquaintance and Companions in Sin, ſhould come from the Dead, and tell you, that he ſuffered the Torments of Hell, for thoſe Sins that you are Guilty of, and for neglecting thoſe Duties which you neglect, and for living ſuch a Careleſs, Worldly, Ungodly Life, as you now live, and ſhould therefore adviſe you to take another Courſe: If you ſhould meet ſuch an one in your Chamber when you are going to Bed, and he ſhould ſay to you, O! take heed of this Carnal Unholy Life! Set your ſelf to ſeek the Lord withall your Might; neglect not your Soul, prepare for Eternity, that you come not to the place of Torment that I am in; How would this take with you? And what manner of perſons would you afterwards be.

5. *Queſt.* If you knew that this was the laſt day you had to live in the World, how would you ſpend this Day? If you were ſure when you go to Bed, that you ſhould never riſe again, would not your thoughts of another Life be more ſerious that Night? If you knew when you are Praying, that you ſhould never Pray more, would you not be more earneſt and importunate in that Prayer? Or if you knew when you are Preaching, or Hearing, or Exhorting your Sinful Acquaintance, that this were the laſt Opportunity you ſhould have, would you not ply it more cloſely than uſually you do? Why you do not know but it may be the laſt: And you are ſure your laſt is near at hand.

6. *Queſt.*

6. *Queſt.* If you had ſeen the general Diſſolution of the World, and all the Pomp and Glory of it conſumed to Aſhes: If you ſaw all on a fire about you, Sumptuous Buildings, Cities, Kingdoms, Land, Water, Earth, Heaven all flaming about your Ears: If you had ſeen all that Men labour'd for, and ſold their Souls for, gone: Friends gone: The place of your former abode gone: the Hiſtory ended, and all come down, what would ſuch a ſight as this perſwade you to do? Why, ſuch a ſight thou ſhalt certainly ſee. I put my Queſtion to thee in the words of the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 3. *Seeing all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought you to be in all Holy Converſation and Godlineſs, looking for, and haſting unto the coming of the Day of God, wherein the Heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat?* As if he ſhould ſay, We cannot poſſibly conceive or expreſs what manner of Perſons we ſhould be in all Holineſs and Godlineſs, when we do but think of the ſudden, and certain, and terrible Diſſolution of all things below.

7. *Queſt.* What if you had ſeen the proceſs of the Judgment of the great Day? If you had ſeen the Judgment ſet, and the Books opened, and the moſt ſtand trembling on the left Hand of the Judge, and Chriſt himſelf accuſing them of their Rebellions and neglects, and remembring them of all their former ſlightings of his grace, and at laſt Condemning them to perpetual perdition? If you had ſeen the Godly ſtanding on the right Hand, and Jeſus Chriſt acknowledging their faithful Obedience, and adjudging them to the poſſeſſion of the joy of their Lord? What manner of Perſons would you have been after ſuch a ſight as this? Why, this ſight thou ſhalt one Day ſee, as ſure as thou liveſt. And why then ſhould not the foreknowledge of ſuch a day awake thee to thy Duty?

8. *Queſt.* What if you had once ſeen Hell open, and and all the Damned there in their eaſleſs Torments, and had heard them crying out of their ſlothfulneſs in the

Day of their Visitation, and wishing that they had but another life to live, and that God would but try them once again? One crying out of his neglect of Duty, and another of his loitering and trifling, when he should have been labouring for his Life? What manner of persons would you have been after such a sight as this? What if you had seen Heaven opened, as *Stephen* did, and all his Saints there Triumphing in Glory, and enjoying the End of their Labours and Sufferings? What a Life would you lead after such a sight as this? Why, you will see this with your Eyes before it be long.

9. *Quest.* What if you had lain in Hell but one year, or one day, or hour, and there felt all those Torments that now you do but hear of? And God should turn you into the World again, and try you with another lifes time, and say, I will see whether thou wilt be yet any better; what manner of persons would you be? If you were to live a thousand years, would you not gladly live as strictly as the preciesest Saints, and spend all those years in Prayer and Duty, so you might but escape the Torment which you suffered? How seriously then would you speak of Hell! And pray against it! And hear, and read, and watch, and obey! How earnestly would you Admonish the Careless to take heed, and look about them to prevent their Ruin? And will not you take Gods Word for the Truth of this, except you feel it? Is it not your Wisdom to do as much now to prevent it, as you would do to remove it when it is too late? Is it not more Wisdom to spend this Life in labouring for Heaven, while ye have it, than to lie in Torment, wishing for more time in vain?

10. *Quest.* What if you had been possessed but one year of the Glory of Heaven, and there joyned with the Saints and Angels in the beholding of God, and singing his Praise, and afterwards should be turned into the World ag in? What a Life would you lead? What pains would you take, rather than to be deprived of such

such incomparable Glory? Would you think any cost too great, or Diligence too much? If one of those that are now in Heaven, should come to live on Earth again, what persons would they be? What a stir would they make? How seriously would they drive on the business of their Salvation? The Country would ring of their exceeding Holy and Strict Conversations. They would as far excel the Holiest Persons on the Earth, as they excell the Careless World. Before they would lose that Blessed Estate, they would follow God with Cries both Day and Night, and throw away all, and suffer every Day a Death. And should not we do as much to obtain it?

Yet I will add a few more words to the Godly in special, to shew them why they above all Men should be laborious for Heaven; and that there is a great deal of Reason, that though all the World besides do sit still, and be careless, yet they should abhor that lazines and negligence, and should lay out all their strength on the Work of God. To this end, I desire them also to answer soberly to these few Interrogatories.

1. *Quest.* What manner of Persons should those be, whom God hath chosen out to be Vessels of Mercy, and hath given them the very Cream and Quintessence of his Blessings, when the rest of the World are passed by, and put off with Common, and Temporal, and left-hand Mercies? They who have the Blood of Christ given them, and the Spirit for Sanctification, Consolation and Preservation, and the Pardon of Sins, and Adoption to Sonship, and the Guard of Angels, and the Mediation of the Son of God, and the special Love of the Father, and the Promise and Seal of *Everlasting Rest*! Do but tell me in good sadness, what kind of lives these Men should live?

2. *Quest.* What manner of persons should those be, who have felt the smart of their negligence, so much as the godly have done? In the new Birth, in their several wounds and troubles of Conscience, in their doubt,

and fears, in their ſharp Afflictions on Body and State. They that have groaned and cryed out ſo oft, under the Senſe and Effects of their Negligence, and are like enough to feel it again. if if they do not reform it, ſure one would think they ſhould be ſlothful no more.

3. *Queſt.* What manner of perſons ſhould theſe be in Holy Diligence, who have been ſo long convinced of the evil of Lazineſs; and have confeſſed on their Knees a hundred and a hundred times, both in publick and in private; and have told God in prayer how unexcuſably they have therein offended; Should they thus confeſs their Sin, and yet commit it, as if they told God what they would do, as well as what they have done?

4. *Queſt.* What manner of perſons ſhould thoſe be in painful Godlineſs, who have bound themſelves to God by ſo many Covenants as we have done, and in ſpecial have Covenanted ſo oft to be more painful and faithful in his Service? At every Sacrament; on many Days of Humiliation and Thankſgiving; in moſt of our deep Diſtreſſes and Dangerous Sickneſſes, we are ſtill ready to bewail our neglects, and to engage our ſelves, if God will but try us and truſt once again, how diligent and laborious we will be, and how we will improve our time, and reprove offenders, and watch over our ſelves, and ply our work; and do him more Service in a Day, than we did in a Month: The Lord Pardon our perfidious Covenant-breaking; and grant that our Engagements may not condemn us.

5. *Queſt.* What manner of perſons ſhould they be, who are ſo near to God as we, who are his Children in his Family, ſtill under his Eye; the Objects of his greateſt Jealouſie, as well as Love? *Nadab* and *Abihu* can tell you, that the Flames of Jealouſie are hotteſt about his Altar: And *Uzza*, and the *fifty thouſand and ſeventy Beth-ſheamites*, 1 Sam. 6. 19. though Dead, do yet tell you, that Juſtice as well as Mercy, is moſt active about the Ark. And *Ananias* and his Wife can tell you, that profeſſion is no cover for Tranſgreſſion. *Judgement beginneth*

at

at the House of God, 1 Pet. 4. 17. And the *destroying Angel doth begin at the Sanctuary*, Ezek. 9. 5, 6.

6. *Quest.* What manner of Men should they be in Duty, who have received so much encouragement, as we have done by our Success? Who have tasted such sweetness in diligent Obedience as doth much more than countervail all the pains; who have so oft had Experience of the wide difference between lazy and laborious Duty, by their different Issues; Who have found all our lazy Duties unfruitful; and all our strivings and wrastlings with God successful, so that we were never importunate with God in vain. We who had so many admirable National and Personal Deliverances upon urgent seeking; and have received almost all our solid Comforts in a way of close and constant Duty: How should we above all Men ply our Work?

7. *Quest.* What manner of Men should they be, who are yet at such great uncertainties, whether they are Sanctified or Justified, or whether they are the Children of God or no; or what shall Everlastingly become of their Souls, as most of the Godly that I meet with are? They that have discovered the excellency of the Kingdom; and yet have not discovered their interest in it, but discern a danger of perishing or losing all, and have need of that advice, *Heb.* 4. 1. and have so many doubts to wrestle with daily, as we have: How should such Men bestir themselves in time?

8. *Quest.* What manner of persons should they be in Holiness, who have so much of the Great Work yet undone as we have? So many Sins in so great strength; Graces weak, Sanctification imperfect, Corruption still working our ruine, and taking Advantage of all our Omissions. When we are as a Boat-Man on the water, let him row never so hard a Month together, yet if he do but stick his Hand, and think to ease himself, his Boat goes faster down the Stream, than before it went up: So do our Souls, when we think to ease our selves by abating our pains in Duty. Our time is short: Our

enemies mighty: Our hinderances many: God ſeem yet at a great diſtance from many of us: Our thoughts of him are dull and ſtrange, and unbelieving: Our acquaintance and communion with Chriſt is ſmall: And our deſires to be with him are as ſmall. And ſhould Men in our caſe ſtand ſtill?

9. *Queſt.* What manner of Men ſhould they be in their diligence, whoſe lives and duties are of ſo great concernment to the ſaving or deſtroying of a Multitude of Souls? When if we ſlip, ſo many are ready to ſtumble: And if we ſtumble, ſo many are ready to fall. "If we pray hard for them, and admoniſh them daily, "and faithfully, and plainly, and exhort them with bowels of pity and love, and go before them in a Holy Inoffenſive Converſation, it is twenty to one but we may be inſtruments of ſaving many of them from everlaſting perdition, and bringing them to the poſſeſſion of the inheritance with us: On the contrary, if we ſilently neglect them, or ſinfully offend them, we may be occaſions of their perpetual Torment: And what a ſad thought is that to an honeſt and merciful Heart! That we may not deſtroy the Souls for whom Chriſt died; that we may not rob them of their everlaſting Happineſs, and God of the Praiſes that in Heaven they would give him; What manner of perſons ſhould we be in our Duties and Examples?

10. *Queſt.* Laſtly, what manner of perſons ſhould they be, on whom the Glory of the Great God doth ſo much depend? Men will judge of the Father by the Children, and of the Maſter by the Servants. We bear his Image, and therefore Men will meaſure him by his Repreſentation. He is no where in the World ſo lively repreſented, as in his Saints: And ſhall they ſet him forth as a Patron of Viciouſneſs or Idleneſs? All the World is not capable of Honouring or Diſhonouring God ſo much as we: And the leaſt of his Honour is of more worth than all our Lives. I have harped all this while upon the Apoſtles ſtring, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11. And now

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let me give it the laſt touch: Seeing then that all the things fore-mentioned are ſo, I charge thee that art a Chriſtian, in my Maſters Name to conſider, and reſolve the Queſtion, *What manner of Perſons ought we to be in All Holy Converſation and Godlineſs?* And let thy Life anſwer the Queſtion as well as thy Tongue.

DIRECT.

How to uſe Chriſt, and Live upon him as our Mediator.

1. TO talk and boaſt of Chriſt is eaſie, and to uſe him for the increaſe of our carnal ſecurity, and boldneſs in ſinning: But to live in the *daily Uſe* of Chriſt to thoſe Ends of his Office, to which he is by us to be made uſe of, is a matter of greater *Skill* and *Diligence*, than many ſelf-eſteeming Profeſſours are aware of. What Chriſt himſelf hath done, or will do, for our Salvation, is not directly the thing that we are now conſidering of; but what *Uſe* he requireth *us* to make of him in the Life of Faith. He hath told us, that his Fleſh is meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed; and that except we eat his Fleſh and drink his Blood, we have no Life in us. Here is our *Uſe* of Chriſt expreſſed by *Eating* and *Drinking* his Fleſh and Blood, which is by Faith. The *General parts* of the work of *Redemption*, *Chriſt* hath *himſelf* performed for us, without asking our Conſent, or impoſing upon us any Condition on our parts, without which he would not do that work: As the Sun doth illuſtrate and warm the Earth whether it will or nor, and as the Rain falleth on the Graſs, without asking whether it conſent, or will be thankful; ſo Chriſt without our conſent or knowledge, did take our nature, and fulfil the Law, and ſatisfie the offended Law-giver, and

Merit Grace, and conquer Satan, Death and Hell, and became the Glorified Lord of all: But for the exercise of his Graces in us, and our Advancement to Communion with God, and our living in the strength and joys of Faith, he is himself the Object of our Duty, even of that Faith which we must daily and diligently exercise upon him: And thus Christ will profit us no further than we make Use of him by Faith. It is not a *forgotten Christ* that objectively Comforteth or Encourageth the Soul; but a *Christ believed in*, and skilfully and faithfully Used to that end. It is *Objectively* (principally) that Christ is called *Our Wisdom*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. The *knowledge of him*, and the Mysteries of Grace in him, is the *Christian* or *Divine Philosophy* or *Wisdom*, in opposition to the vain Philosophy, which the Learned Heathens boasted of. And therefore *Paul* determined to know nothing but Christ Crucified, that is, to make Ostentation of no other knowledge, and to glory in nothing but the Cross of Christ, and so to Preach Christ, as if he knew nothing else but Christ. See 1 *Cor.* 1. 23. & 2. 2. *Gal.* 6. 14. And it is *Objectively* that Christ is said to dwell in our Hearts by Faith, *Ephes.* 3. 17. Faith keepeth him still upon the Heart by continual Cogitation, Application and Improvement: As a Friend is said to dwell in our Hearts, whom we continually love and think of.

2. Christ himself teacheth us to Distinguish beween *Faith in God* (as God) and *Faith in himself* (as Mediator:) John 14. 1. [*Let not your Hearts be troubled: Ye believe in God:* (or, Believe ye in God?) *believe also in me.*] These set together are the sufficient cure of a Troubled Heart. It is not *Faith in God as God*, but *Faith in Christ as Mediator*, that I am now to speak of: And that not as it is inherent in the Understanding, but as it is operative on the Heart, and in the Life: And this is not the smallest part of the *Life of Faith*, by which the Just are said to live: Every True Christian must in his measure be able to say with *Paul*, Gal. 2. 20. *I am Crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live: Yet not I, but Christ liveth*

liveth in me: *And the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* The *Pure Godhead* is the *Beginning* and *the End* of all; But Christ is *the Image of the Invisible God, the first Born of every Creature; and by him all things were Created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities or Powers, all things were Created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things do consist. And he is the Head of the Body, the Church; who is the beginning, the first Born from the Dead; that in all things he might have the Preheminence.* Col 1. 16, 17, 18, 19. *In him it is that we who were sometimes far off, are made nigh, even by his Blood: For he is our Peace, who hath Reconciled both* Jew *and* Gentile *unto God in one Body by the Cross, having slain the Enmity thereby: And came and Preached Peace to them that were far off, and to them that were nigh: For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father: So that now we are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houshold of God*, Ephes. 2. 13, 14, 16, 17, 18. *In him* it is *that we have boldness and access with confidence through Faith in him*, Eph. 3. 12. *He is the Way, the Truth and the Life: And no Man cometh to the Father, but by him*: John 14. 6. It is *by the Blood of Jesus, that we have boldness* (and liberty) *to enter into the Holiest: By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his Flesh*; Because *we have so Great a Priest over the House of God, we may draw near with a true Heart, in full assurance of Faith*, &c. Heb. 10. 19, 20, 21, 22. *By him it is that we have access by Faith into this Grace wherein we stand, and boast in hope of the Glory of God*, Rom. 5. 1, 2. So that we must have *all our Communion with God through him.*

3. I shall here briefly name the *Uses* which we must make of Christ by Faith, In Order to our Holy Converse with God: But I must tell you that it is a Doctrine which requireth a *prepared Heart*, and hath *life within* to enable it to *relish* Holy Truth, and to dispose it

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to Diligence, Delight, and constant practice. A *Senseless* Reader will feel but little *savour* in it, and a *sluggish* Reader that suffereth it to dye as soon as it hath toucht his ears or fantasie, will fall short of the *Practice* and the *Pleasure* of this Life. He must *have faith* that will *live by faith*: And he must have the *Heart* and *Nature* of a *Child*, that will take pleasure in loving, Reverent and Obedient Converse with a Father.

4. The darkness of *Ignorance* and *Unbelief*, is the great impediment of the Soul that desireth to draw near to God: When it knoweth not God, or knoweth not Mans capacity of enjoying him, and how much he regardeth the Heart of Man; or knoweth not by what way he must be sought and found; or when he doubteth of the certainty of the word which declareth the duty of the hopes of Man; all this or any of this, will suppress the aspiring desires of the Soul, and clip its wings, and break the Heart of its holy aspirings after God, by killing or weakning the hopes of its success.

Here then make *Use* of *Jesus Christ*, the great revealer of God, and his will to the blinded World, and the great confirmer of the Divine Authority of his Word. Life and Immortality are brought more fully to light by the Gospel, than ever they were by any other means. *Moses* and the Prophets did bring with their Doctrine sufficient evidence of its credibility. But Christ hath brought both a fuller Revelation, and a fuller evidence to help belief. An inspired *Prophet* which proveth his inspiration to us, is a credible Messenger: But when God himself shall come down into flesh, and converse with Man, and teach him the knowledge of God, and the way to Life, and tell him the Mysteries of the World to come, and seal his Testimonies with unquestionable proofs, who will not learn of such a Teacher? and who will deny Belief to such a Messenger, except absurd unreasonable Men? Remember then, when *Ignorance* or *Unbelief* would hinder your access to God, that you have the *ablest Teacher* and the *surest Witness* to acquaint you with

with God in all the World. If God had ſent an Angel from Heaven, to tell you what he is, and what he requireth of you, and what he will do for you, would it not be very acceptable to you? But he hath done much more; he hath ſent his Son: The Deity it ſelf hath appeared in fleſh: He that hath *ſeen God*, and he that *is God*, hath come among Men to acquaint them with God: His Teſtimony is more ſure and credible than any Angels: Heb. 1. 1, 2, 3. *God who at ſundry times, and in divers manners ſpake in times paſt to the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his Son.* John 1. 18. *No Man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the Boſome of the Father, he hath declared him.* We have *neither heard the Voice of God, nor ſeen his ſhape.* John 5. 37. *No Man hath ſeen the Father, ſave he which is of God; he hath ſeen the Father.* John 6. 46. *No Man knoweth the Father ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him.* Matth. 11. 27. What more can we deſire, that is ſhort of the ſight of the Glory of God, than to have him revealed to us by a Meſſenger from Heaven, and ſuch a Meſſenger as himſelf hath ſeen him, and is God himſelf? *Plato* and *Plotinus* may deſcribe God to us according to their dark Conjectures: Something we may diſcern of him by obſerving his works: But Chriſt hath declared what he ſaw, and what he knew beyond all poſſibility of miſtake. And leſt his own Teſtimony ſhould ſeem queſtionable to us, he hath confirmed it by a life of Miracles, and by riſing from the dead himſelf, and aſcending viſibly to Heaven, and by the Holy Ghoſt, and his Miraculous gifts which he gave to the Meſſengers of his Goſpel. Had it been no more than his Reſurrection from the Dead, it had been enough to prove the utter unreaſonableneſs of unbelief.

5. It is alſo a great impediment to the Soul in its approaching to God, that *Infinite diſtance* diſableth us to *conceive* of him aright: We ſay as *Elihu*, Job. 36. 26. *Behold God is great, and we know him not* And indeed it is impoſſible that mortal Man ſhould have any *adequate*

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apprehenſions of his *Eſſence*. But in his *Son* he hath come down to us, and ſhewed himſelf in the cleareſt Glaſs that ever did reveal him: Think of him therefore as he appeared in our fleſh: As he ſhewed himſelf in his Holineſs and Goodneſs to the World. You may have *poſitive* thoughts of *Jeſus Chriſt*: Though you may not think that the Godhead was fleſh, yet may you think of it as it *appeared in fleſh*. It may quiet the underſtanding to conceive of *God* as *incarnate*, and to know that we cannot yet *know him as he is*, or have any adequate conceptions of him: Theſe may delight us till we reach to more.

6. It hindereth the Souls approach to God, when the *Infinite diſtance* makes us think that God will not regard or take notice of ſuch contemptible worms as we: We are ready to think that *he* is *too high* for our Converſe or Delight. In this caſe the Soul hath no ſuch remedy, as to look to *Chriſt*, and ſee how the Father *hath* regarded us, and ſet his Heart upon us, and ſent his Son to ſeek and ſave us: O wonderful aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion of Eternal Love! Believe that God aſſumed fleſh to make himſelf familiar with Man; and you can never queſtion whether he regard us, or will hold communion with us.

7. It hindereth our comfortable acceſs to God, when we are deterred by the *Glory* of his Infiniteneſs and Majeſty: As the eye is not able to gaze upon the Sun unleſs it be overſhadowed. So the Soul is afraid of the Majeſty of God, and overwhelmed by it, when it ſhould be delighted in it. Againſt this there is no ſuch remedy, as to behold God appearing to us in his Son, where his Majeſty is veiled, and where he approacheth us familiarly in our nature, to invite us to him with holy confidence and reverent boldneſs. Chriſt did not appear in a terrible form: Women durſt diſcourſe with him: Beggars, and Cripples, and Diſeaſed People durſt ask his help: Sinners durſt eat with him: The proud contemned him, but the lowly were not frighted from him.

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He took upon him the *form of a Servant*, and made himſelf of *no Reputation*, that he might converſe familiarly with the meaneſt and thoſe of no reputation. Though we may not debaſe the Godhead, to imagine that it is humbled in Glory, as it was on Earth, in the fleſh of Chriſt; yet this condeſcenſion is unſpeakable encouragement to the Soul to come with boldneſs unto God, that was frighted from him.

8. When the *guilt of Sin affrighteth* us from God, and we are thinking that God will not accept ſuch great offenders as we have been, then *Chriſt* is our remedy who hath paid our debt, and born our ſtripes, and procured and ſealed us a pardon by his Blood. Shall pardoned Sins drive us from him that pardoneth them? He hath juſtified us by his Righteouſneſs: The Curſe and Condemnation are terrible indeed; but he hath taken them away, and given us a free diſcharge.

9. The *Infirmities* alſo of our Souls in Duty, are oftentimes a great Diſcouragement to us, in our approaches to the moſt Holy Jealous God: To find ſo little knowledge of God, ſo little love to him, ſuch cold deſires, ſuch wandring and diſtracted thoughts, ſuch dull requeſts: It is hard to have lively and thankful apprehenſions, of Gods acceptance of ſuch defective, lame Meditations or Prayers: But we are apt to think, that he will abhor both them and us, and that he can take no pleaſure in them, yea, that it is as good not pray at all. Here faith hath full relief in Chriſt: Two things it can ſay from him to encourage the fearful Soul: 1. That our acceptance with the Father, is through the Merits of his Son: And *he* is *worthy*, though *we* are *unworthy*. If *we* have but the *worthineſs* of *Faith*, and *Repentance*, and *ſincere Deſire*, Chriſt hath the *worthineſs* of *perfect Holineſs* and *Obedience* for us. We go not to the Father in our own Name, but in his: And whatever we ask, the Father in the Name of Chriſt according to his will, he will give it us: *Joh.* 16. 23. & 14 13. & 15 16. 2. That all the infirmities of our Souls, and ſervices are forgiven

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us through Christ: He hath undertaken to answer for them all, and to justifie us from all such Accusations. By Faith thou maist, as it were, hear Christ thus speaking for thine Encouragement: [Go boldly, poor Sinner, into my Fathers presence: Fear not the guilt of thy Sins, nor the imperfection of thy Prayers; as long as thou truly repentest of them, and Desirest to be delivered from them, and Trustest in me, I am thy worthiness; my righteousness is perfect without spot; I have taken all thy faults and failings upon me: I have undertaken to answer for all the imperfections of thy holy things: Sincerity is thy endowment; Perfection is mine: Trust me in the performance of the trust which I have undertaken.]

10. Sometime the Soul that would draw near to God, is overwhelmed with *Grief* and *Terrour*, so that the Sense of Sin, and Danger and Misery do even distract Men, and cast them into an agony; so that they say with *David*, Psal. 77. 2, 3, 4. [*My Soul refuseth to be Comforted, I remembred God, and was troubled; I complained, and my Spirit was over-whelmed; Thou holdest mine Eyes waking: I am so troubled, that I cannot speak.*] Yea, they think they *feel* God *thrust them from him*, and tell them, that he hath *utterly forsaken them*. In this case *Faith must look to Christ*, and remember that *He* was in an *Agony* when he *prayed*, and in a greater Agony than ever you were, so that he sweat even drops of Blood, and yet in that Agony he *prayed more earnestly*, Luke 22. 44. He himself once cryed out upon the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*: And yet he was the Beloved of the Father, and is now at his right hand in Glory; and all this he did, that we might *not be forsaken*: He hath removed the enmity: He hath reconciled us to God: By grief he passed himself to joy, and he will wipe away his Servants Tears, and cause their griefs to end in joy.

11. Sometime the Soul that would draw near to God, is molested with a storm of *Hideous Temptations*, and even confounded

confounded with a ſwarm of diſordered perplexed *thoughts*: Satan aſſaulteth it with Temptations to deſpair, Temptations to horrid Blaſphemous thoughts, Temptations to entangle, intermit, corrupt or prevert the duty which they are about; ſo that the Soul is diſcouraged, over whelmed and broken with the inward aſſaults, and troubles, and diſtractions which it undergoeth. In this caſe Faith hath a *Saviour* ſuitable to our relief. It can look to him that *was tempted* in all points like as we are, without ſin, and is now ſuch an High Prieſt as can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and therefore we may come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need, Heb. 4. 14, 15, 16. *In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a Merciful and Faithful High Prieſt, in things pertaining to God to make Reconciliation for the ſins of the People: For he himſelf having ſuffered being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are Tempted*, Heb. 2. 17, 18. He ſubmitted not only to be Tempted by *Satan*, but Tempted in a *Wilderneſs*, where he had no Man to comfort him; and to be Tempted to the moſt *Horrid Blaſphemy and Wickedneſs*, even to fall down and Worſhip the Devil himſelf; and he ſuffered the Tempter violently to carry him to the Pinnacle of the Temple, *Matth.* 4. What ſhould we think of our ſelves, if *we* had been uſed thus? Should we not think that God had utterly forſaken us? He ſuffered himſelf to be Tempted alſo by Men: By the abuſes and Reproaches of his Enemies; by the deſertion of his Followers; by the carnal Counſel of *Peter*, perſwading him to put by the Death which he was to undergo. And he that made all Temptations ſerve to the Triumph of his patience, and conquering power, will give the Victory alſo to his Grace, in the weakeſt Soul.

12. It would be the greateſt attractive to us to draw near to God, and make the thoughts of him pleaſant to us, if we could but believe that he *dearly loveth us*, that he is *Reconciled* to us, and taketh us for his *Children*, and that

that he taketh pleaſure in us, and that he reſolveth for ever to glorifie us with his Son; and that the deareſt Friend that we have in the World, doth not love us the thouſandth part ſo much as he. And all this in Chriſt is clearly repreſented to the Eye of Faith. All this is procured for Believers by him: And all this is given to Believers in him: In him God is reconciled to us: He is our Father, and dwelleth among us, and in us, and walketh in us, and is our God, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16, 17, 18. Light and Heat are not more abundant in the Sun, than *Love is* in *Jeſus Chriſt*. To look on *Chriſt*, and not perceive the *Love of God*, is as to look on the *Sun*, and not to ſee and acknowledge its *light*. Therefore when ever you find your Hearts averſe to God, and to have no pleaſure in him, look then to *Jeſus*, and obſerve in him the unmeaſurable love of God: That *you may be able to comprehend with all the Saints, what is the breadth and length and depth, and height, and to know the Love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulneſs of God*, Eph. 3. 18, 19. *Love* and *Goodneſs* are that to the *will*, which *delicious ſweetneſs* is to the *ſenſitive Appetite*: Draw near then and taſte the Feaſt of Love which God hath prepared and propoſed by his Son. Do'ſt thou not ſee or feel the Love of God? Come near, and look upon God incarnate; upon a Crucified Chriſt; upon the Covenant Sealed in his Blood; upon all the Benefits of his Redemption; upon all the Priviledges of the Saints; and upon the Glory purchaſed, poſſeſſed and promiſed by him: Put thy Hand into his wounded ſide, and be not faithleſs, but believing; and then thou wilt cry out, *My Lord, and My God.*

13. So alſo when the Soul would fain perceive *in it ſelf* the flames of *Love to God*, it is the beholding of Chriſt by Faith, which is the ſtriking of fire, and the effectual means of kindling Love: And this is the true approach to God, and the true Communion and Converſe with him. So far as we love him, ſo far do we draw near him, and ſo far have we true Communion with

with him. O what would the Soul of a Believer give, that it could but burn in Love to God, as oft as in Prayer or Meditation, or conference, his Name and Attributes are mentioned or remembred! For this, there is no such powerful means, as believingly to look on Christ, in whom such glorious Love appeareth, as will draw forth the Love of all that by a lively Faith discern it. Behold the Love that God hath manifested by his Son, and thou canst not but Love him who is the spring of this Transcendent Love. In the *Law* God sheweth his frowning wrath: And therefore it breedeth the *Spirit of Bondage unto fear:* But in *Christ* God appeareth to us not only as *Loving us*, but as *Love it self*, and therefore as most lovely to us, giving us the Spirit of Adoption, or of filial Love, by which we fly and cry to him as our Father.

14. The *actual undispostedness* and *disability* of the Soul, to *Prayer*, Meditation, and all Holy Converse with the Blessed God, is the great impediment of our walking with him: And against this our Relief is all in *Christ*: He is filled with the Spirit, to Communicate to his Members: He can quicken us when we are dull: He can give us Faith, when we are unbelieving; he can give us boldness when we are discouraged: He can poor out upon us the Spirit of Supplication; which shall help our infirmities, when we know not what to pray for as we ought. Beg of him then the Spirit of Prayer: And look to his example, who Prayed with strong Cries and Tears, and continued all the Night in Prayer, and spake a parable to this end, that we should always Pray, and not waxe faint, *Luke* 18. 1. Call to him, and he that is with the Father, will reach the Hand of his Spirit to you, and will quicken your desires, and lift you up.

15. Sometime the Soul is hearkning to *Temptations* of *Unbelief*, and doubting whether God observe our Prayers, or whether there is so much to be got by Prayers, as we are told: In such a case Faith must look to Christ, who

hath not only Commanded it, and Encouraged us by Example, but also made us such *plentiful Promises* of Acceptance with God, and the grant of our Desires: Recourse to *these Promises* will animate us to draw nigh God.

16. Sometime the present Sense of our *vileness*, who are but dust and despicable Worms, doth Discourage us, and weaken our expectations from God. Against this, what a wonderful relief is it to the Soul, to think of our Union with Christ, and of the Dignity and Glory of our Head? Can God despise the Members of his Son? Can he Trample upon them that are as his flesh and bone? Will he cut off, or forsake, or cast away the weakest parts of his Body?

17. Sometime the guilt of *renewed infirmities* or *decays* doth renew distrust, and make us shrink, and we are like the Child in the Mothers Arms, that feareth when he loseth his holt, as if his safety were more in his holt of her, than in her holt of him: Weak Duties have Weak Expectations of Success. In this case, what an excellent remedy hath *Faith*, in looking to the *perpetual intercession of Christ*, is he Praying for us in the Heavens, and shall we not be bold to Pray, and expect an Answer? O remember that he is not weak, when we are weak; and that it concerneth us, that he Prayeth for us: And that we have now an unchangeable Priest, who is able to *save them to the uttermost*, or to *perpetuity*, that *come* (sincerely) to *God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*, Heb. 7. 24, 25. If you *heard* Christ Pray for you, would it not encourage you to Pray, and perswade you that God will not reject you? Undoubtedly it would.

18. Sometimes *weak Christians* that have not gifts of *Memory* or *Utterance*, are apt to think that *Ministers* indeed and *Able Men* are accepted of God, but that he little valueth such as them. It is here a great Encouragement to the Soul, to think that Jesus our great High Priest, doth make all his Children Priests to God. They

are

are *a chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, an Holy Nation, a peculiar People, that they should shew forth their Praises of him that hath called them, out of darkness into his Marvellous Light*: *An Holy Priesthood to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. Even their *broken Hearts and Contrite Spirits, are a Sacrifice which God will not despise*, Psal. 51. 17. He knoweth the meaning of the Spirits groans, *Rom.* 8. 26, 27.

19. The *strength of Corruption* which molest the Soul, and are too often strugling with it, and too much prevail, doth greatly discourage us in our approach to that God that hateth all the workers of iniquity. And here Faith may find relief in Christ, not only as he pardoneth us, but as he hath Conquered the Devil and the World himself, and bid us be of good chear, because he hath Conquered; and hath all power given him in Heaven and Earth, and can give us victorious grace in the Season and Measure which he seeth meetest for us, We can do all things through Christ, that strengthneth us. Go to him then by Faith and Prayer, and you shall find that his Grace is sufficient for you.

20. The thoughts of God are the less delightful to the Soul, because that *Death* and the *Grave* do interpose, and we must pass through them before we can enjoy him: And it is unpleasing to Nature, to think of a Separation of Soul and Body, and to think that our flesh must rot in Darkness. But against this, *Faith* hath wonderful relief in *Jesus Christ*. *Forasmuch as we were partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself likewise took part with us, that he might destroy through death him that had the power of Death, even the Devil, and deliver them who through fear of Death, were all their Lifetime subject to Bondage.* Heb. 2. 14, 15. O what an Encouragement it is to Faith, to observe that *Christ* once *dyed* himself, and that he *rose from the Dead*, and Reigneth with the Father? It being *impossible that Death should hold him*: And having conquered that which seemed to conquer Him, it no more hath Dominion over him, but he hath the Keys of Death and

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